

URGENT ACTION

DEMAND PROTECTION FOR INDIGENOUS ACTIVISTS

Indigenous activists, Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez, have received a threatening letter. A week earlier they and other members of OPIM were subject to an aggressive and intimidating search by members of the Mexican army.

On 16 June a hand-written threat was found at the house of **Obtilia Eugenio Manuel** and **Cuauhtémoc Ramírez** telling them to stop pressuring the government about the Inter American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) sentences on the cases of Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández. The note also made threats against the Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre, which has worked with the two activists. The note warned them that: "we will never let you alone even if you ask for protection from the government, .. if you don't keep quiet we kill you ... protection is worth shit, we are protected" (*nunca dejamo libre aunque pidan protección del gobierno ..si no callán le matamos ...protección vale mierda nosotros somos protegido*).

Obtilia Eugenio Manuel is the president of the Me'phaa Indigenous People's Organization (Organización del Pueblo Indígena Me'pha, OPIM) and her husband Cuauhtémoc Ramírez is one of its leaders. Both human rights defenders and Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre have been repeatedly threatened for their work with OPIM and supporting Valentina Rosendo Cantú and Inés Fernández, two indigenous women who recently won their demand for justice before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR) for their rape by members of the military in 2002.

On 6 June Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez and other OPIM members were outside their office in Ayutla, Guerrero state when soldiers stopped and began to interrogate them. According to members of OPIM, the soldiers failed to explain the reasons for the stop and search and were aggressive and rude. One soldier allegedly kicked Obtilia Eugenio Manuel in the ankle as she tried to stop what they believed was to be the illegal arrest of Cuauhtémoc Ramírez. Eventually the military withdrew with no further action. Obtilia Eugenio Manuel and Cuauhtémoc Ramírez are among 107 human rights defenders in Guerrero state subject to protection orders (*medidas provisionales*) by the IACtHR, which the authorities have failed to comply with effectively.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, Cuauhtémoc Ramírez, other members of OPIM and Tlachinollan Human Rights Centre;
- Urging the authorities to provide them with effective protection measures, in strict accordance with their wishes, and as ordered by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights;
- Calling on the authorities to carry out a swift, full and impartial investigation into the anonymous threat against them on 16 June and the aggressive military stop and search on 6 June, for the results to be made public and for those responsible for threats and intimidation against them to be brought to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 2 AUGUST 2011 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez,
Delegación Cuauhtémoc,
México D.F., C.P. 06600, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado
Señor Secretario**

Federal Attorney General

Marisela Ibañez Morales
Procuraduría General de la República
Av. Paseo de la Reforma 211-213,
Delegación Cuauhtémoc, México D.F.,
C.P. 06500, MÉXICO
Fax: +52 55 5346 0909 ("tono de fax,
por favour")
Email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Attorney

General/Estimada Señora Procuradora

And copies to:

Human rights organization
Red Solidaria Década Contra la
Impunidad:
[:ddhh_decada@yahoo.com.mx](mailto:ddhh_decada@yahoo.com.mx) ,
tlachinollan.difusion@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 63/10. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/086/2010/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Defending human rights can be a life-threatening job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Some of them have been killed for doing their job. The authorities have recognized that adopting and implementing an effective and comprehensive protection programme (*mecanismo de protección*), as requested by human rights defenders, is paramount. However, they are yet to fulfil their promise.

As founder and director of OPIM, Obtilia Eugenio Manuel has been the target of numerous threats, acts of intimidation and surveillance. One of the most recent threats was a written message delivered to the OPIM office on 6 March 2010 and, later that day, a man was seen overtly watching the OPIM office and taking pictures on his mobile phone. (UA: 63/10 Index: AMR 41/021/2010 Mexico Date: 15 March 2010 and follow ups). On 17 March 2009 Obtilia Eugenio Manuel received three death threats by text message to her mobile phone. One of the messages also warned her that no human rights organization could protect her. In January 2009 Obtilia Eugenio Manuel was followed several times. She recognized one of the men following her as a supporter of a local political boss (*cacique*).

On 9 April 2009 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights ordered the Mexican state to provide Obtilia Eugenio Manuel, her family and others with effective protection measures and to investigate the attacks. To date, only some of the agreed measures have been put in place and those behind the attacks remain at large.

OPIM activist Raúl Hernández spent more than two years in prison on fabricated charges. Amnesty International declared him a prisoner of conscience and he was eventually released on 30 August 2010. Four other activists had also been imprisoned with him for 11 months. In February 2009 Manuel Ponce Rosas and Raúl Lucas Lucía, two indigenous human rights defenders with sister organization in Ayutla were abducted, tortured and killed. Those responsible have never been brought to justice.

Further information on UA: 63/10 Index: AMR 41/039/2011 Issue Date: 21 June 2011

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